

Congress of the United States

Washington, DC 20515

April 23, 2010

The Honorable Tom Vilsack
Secretary of Agriculture
United States Department of Agriculture
1400 Independence Ave. SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-0002

Dear Secretary Vilsack:

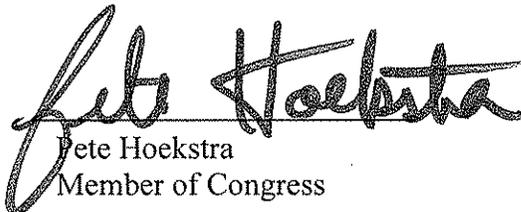
We write to you today to seek your support for the domestic asparagus industry through the commodity purchase program. Recent years continue to show dramatic increases in Peruvian imports that severely impacted the industry. Therefore, we are writing to request a commodity purchase of asparagus products to assist the damaged industry.

The U.S. asparagus industry continues to face severe challenges. Peru has developed a successful asparagus industry in the last decade largely from the duty-free treatment it gained under the Andean Trade Preferences Act. In reviewing the Act, the Government Accountability Office has several times reported that asparagus production in the United States has been displaced by duty-free imports from Peru and will continue to experience displacement.

While the asparagus industry is working diligently to expand fresh market opportunities and develop new consumer-friendly processed products, the industry is still in a position of excess productive capacity due to these increased quantities of imports. As the industry works to transition, a need for the Department of Agriculture to purchase asparagus products continues to exist. *For this reason we are requesting that the Department of Agriculture make a bonus commodity purchase of asparagus products – including 2.5 million pounds of canned cut and tips and 1.5 million pounds of frozen cut and tips*

We look forward to working with you to ensure that the department's commodity purchases serve the needs of our nutritional programs, as well as assist America's farmers by reducing excess supplies. Your willingness to purchase domestic asparagus at this critical time would be greatly appreciated.

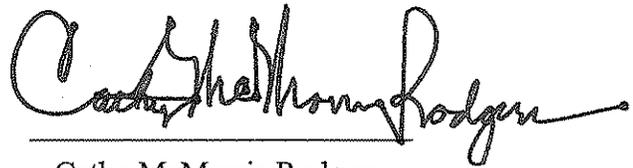
Sincerely,


Pete Hoekstra
Member of Congress

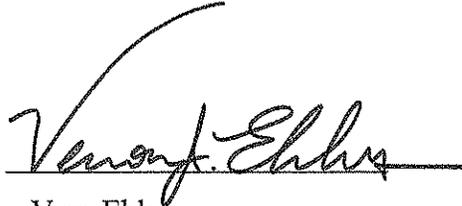

Doc Hastings
Member of Congress



Fred Upton
Member of Congress



Cathy McMorris Rodgers
Member of Congress



Vern Ehlers
Member of Congress



Jay Inslee
Member of Congress



Candice Miller
Member of Congress



Rick Larsen
Member of Congress